

Crane, Paula

From: John Sanzone <sanzoneja@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, September 21, 2015 6:48 PM
To: Crane, Paula
Subject: City council comments, September 21

Reconsideration Items, it's hard to comment since the public doesn't know specifically why these items are being reconsidered.

City Manager's Agenda Item #22, the appointment of Iram Farooq as Asst. City Manager for Community Development. I have a great deal of respect for Iram, and I hope this appointment helps to maximize the chances of a productive outcome in the citywide planning process.

City Manager's Agenda Item #26, Transit Strategic Plan. We need to be proactive and aggressive as pertains to transit improvements that can be achieved on the city level.

Barrett Petition regarding accessory units. I find this to be a very welcome zoning petition. Additional units and increasing the potential living area on existing parcels and in existing buildings helps to serve our comprehensive housing goals. This creative, and somewhat obvious, step should absolutely be supported and promoted.

Communications #4 and #8, regarding the Stern petition. I think it's a mistake to remove a potentially contributing mixed-use site from the Mass Ave. overlay district and the North Mass Ave subdistrict. This is an appropriate place for active uses and for some density. I'm hard-pressed to see how this wouldn't directly contradict city goals for Mass. Ave. and our concept of mixed-use and commercial districts in general. — not to mention our housing goals.

Policy order #6, regarding many aspects of Central Square. There's a lot that needs to be done in the long-term, including a total rethink of the public way and public spaces. Proactive cleaning and maintenance and general promotion of attractive design will go a long way toward enhancing the environment for all. It's apparent in Central Square that bad maintenance contributes to a cycle of progressively worse conditions.

Policy order #17, regarding expanding the sewer separation work scope to include streets in the surrounding areas. I'd add an addendum, to include bicycle and transit infrastructure in any reconstructions. We are getting virtually no meaningful bicycle or transit infrastructure in the reconstructions resulting from the current sewer separation work zone in West Cambridge.

Policy order #20, Metropolitan Storage Building. I believe it's a positive step that MIT has brought the building into its academic portfolio.

Policy order #21, I'm not sure who actually wrote this petition but there is a built-in bias in the second WHEREAS that anticipates the outcome. It claims that parking vanishes because large developments bring many cars to local streets. Nevertheless, I think a much more comprehensive parking survey could be more useful to these discussions: that is, a comprehensive survey of the sum quantity of parking spaces in the city (on-street, off-street, and structural), and creating graphical data which represents the total land area of the city that's devoted to automobile driving and parking uses. I believe that this more comprehensive survey could greatly inform our conversations around parking.

Policy order #24, GLX. It is a sad state of Massachusetts politics that we are now fighting to save an already minimal and long-delayed extension, instead of talking about the next several regional transit expansions. Cambridge should be aggressively advocating for the GLX and more and more and more.

Policy order #34, Transit priority signalization. We must treat our bus transit as integral parts of the transportation system, not as stopgap, piecemeal routes. And yes, much of this burden falls on the MBTA and the state government to prioritize transit investment. However, I don't think anyone's hopeful that the current political climate at the state level will yield significant investment into either maintenance or desperately needed expansion. In lieu of that, we must do what we can as a city. We can be proactive with implementing transit priority signaling. In addition, we can pilot and build rapid bus infrastructure, including platform-style bus stations and bus-only lanes. We can comprehensively integrate private shuttles and MBTA bus routes toward the goal of providing the simple service of moving people. Transit priority signalization is not a cutting-edge technology, and it's well past time that we take the step of implementing it, and then start planning the next set of transit improvements in Cambridge.

Policy order #41, Reservoir Hill NCD/HD study, I think this policy order is based on an incorrect assumption. I watched this process closely, and I understand that the CHC will in fact exercise its authority during the study period, as per its charter and city policy. Further, more to the actual point of the study, I encourage Reservoir Hill residents to further engage with the process to achieve an optimal outcome. This is an historic area that greatly contributes to the story and architectural heritage of Cambridge. There are certain homeowners who want to maximize the investment turnover potential of their properties by limiting preservation and regulation of the neighborhood and architectural features of their properties; this shouldn't be the way we treat any neighborhood and is certainly not the Cambridge way. Our history belongs to all of us, and we have to decide whether the common good trumps the individual ability to maximize returns, especially in a way that may detract from their neighbors and from their city. These commissions (I am a member of the Avon Hill NCDC) are a positive, they are collaborative, informative, and neighborly. I find them to be deliberate and fair and most often we end with overall better results for neighborhoods.

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